'BRITNEY'S QUITE MEAN,' SAYS COWELL {page 15}

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BOSTON
Wednesday, September 12, 2012

- Fussy riders complaints range from too loud, too soft announcements to over-filled trash cans
- Really, T riders? Really?
- T officials say they see 100 tweets an hour from passengers {page 02}

OH, THE HORROR!

local

Volunteers mark 9/11 by helping troops

- Service event results in 1,000 military care packages
- Family, friends visit memorial in Garden {page 06}

news

Clinton still Dem's top star

- Former prez, not Obama, is most popular pol {page 12}

sports

NFL Power Rankings

- Pats at No. 2 after Week 1, who got the top slot? {page 24}

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Oh, for T's sake!

The MBTA gets slammed with hundreds of complaints daily ◗ Some are worthy of concern, others seem just silly ◗ Are T riders too fussy?

From service delays to busted AC systems, the MBTA fields a plethora of complaints from tweeting and e-mailing riders every day.

Just by sampling Twitter complaints, it is apparent that many riders are easily annoyed by trains arriving 10 minutes apart, announcement being made too loudly (or too softly) or an over-full trash can.

Even with improvements like new countdown signs at some stations, which T officials said are meant to help riders better plan their trip, some still find reasons to complain.

For example, @burpleyak tweeted Monday: "Next Ashmont train in 12 minutes". How is this new #mbta countdown feature not depressing? :-(Ignorance is bliss!"

In the big scheme of things, the question has to be asked: Are some riders just too fussy?

In July, San Francisco's rapid transit agency had to shut down escalators so a HAZMAT team could remove a "treasure trove" of human feces, which clogged the equipment. In June, a woman was attacked by a rat in New York City's subway, which is rife with rodents.

And despite the recent fare hikes, Boston's public transportation is still among the cheapest in the U.S. — well below San Francisco and New York City.

MBTA Spokesman Joshua Robin said the T's philosophy on whacky complaints is "the more feedback, the better."

"We do get a huge volume of tweets," Robin said. "We appreciate seeing all of it. At a minimum, we know what's going on."

▶ A rider named Mary e-mailed a picture of some discarded boxes at Wollaston station to a half-dozen T officials as well as reporters.

Quoted

"We do get a huge volume of tweets. We literally see well over 100 per hour. We appreciate seeing all of it. At a minimum, we know what's going on."
ROBIN

Some riders will contact the MBTA over issues that are seemingly out of the transit agency's control.

On Sunday, a perturbed rider tweeted the MBTA, "Big guy falling asleep on me on the T, and it's not even cute anymore. @MBTAgm come on guys."

"We get everything from delays to someone else looking at them on the train," Robin said. "Sometimes they'll contact us to tell us that the person sitting across from them is hot. ... Those are the ones that we smile at."

Frequent T rider Jason Alexander stood waiting for his Route 7 bus during rush hour yesterday, which he admitted can sometimes be "a nightmare." Regardless, he said the T does not deserve half the flack it gets from riders.

"I think the T runs pretty well. I take it four or five times a day. They do the best they can getting back and forth," Alexander said. "I lived in New York City, and the train there was horrible. The T is so much better."

MORGAN ROUSSEAU
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Twitter feed

Picky problems

Here's a roundup of some on-the-finicky-fence complaints. Metro asked riders, "What is the silliest T complaint you've heard?"

- "Today a man was swearing mad that a wheelchair rider brushed his foot while maneuvering his chair in a crowded train." @MAKINGCOSTUMES
- "...that it's too expensive ... even with the fare increase it's still the cheapest ride around" @STEVEN_DEMEO
- "...why can't we just drive through the red lights? This bus is super late and cars will stop for it." @NIKKIF610

Metro found these gems, and wondered: Are they really pout-worthy?

- "Big guy falling asleep on me on the T and it's not even cute anymore @MBTAgm come on guys." @IRL_STINE
- "gonna miss my train bc this guy drives like an old lady. 40 minutes from harvard to south station! thanks, granny. #mbta" @BYSTANDER12
- "Transit police at DTX deep into texting and playing with their phones at the popcorn stand. Always working hard! #mbta #Boston" @KATELOCKWOOD77
- "Mass transit. The loudest place on earth. I have visions of stuffing these discarded Metros in 7 mouths. And two ears. #mbta" @YENDORMAI

In the news

120

Last night, 120 AIDS vaccine researchers joined those living with the affliction for a dinner at the Victory Programs' Boston Living Center during the AIDS Vaccine 2012 Conference. Organizers called it an "experimental dinner" that let Boston Living Center members who are living with HIV/AIDS share their stories with the researchers. METRO

Today's local tweet

"Oh, #Boston, thanks for the #awkward #MBTA moments. Random middle-aged lady as I wait for the bus: 'You're exotic and beautiful. You are.'"

@SYLVIETSE, ON HER NOT-SO-SECRET ADMIRER

In the news

Amy Bishop pleads guilty to murder

BRAINTREE. Amy Bishop, the Harvard-educated professor, pleaded guilty yesterday to killing three colleagues and wounding three others during a rampage at the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

▶ Bishop

Bishop, 47, will not be eligible for the death penalty under the plea agreement, according to The Huntsville Times.

She originally pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity, but yesterday plead guilty.

Bishop is also accused of fatally shooting her brother in her family's Braintree home in 1986. That incident was originally ruled an accident, but she was indicted after authorities reexamined the case after the rampage.

METRO

Boston's first black City Council president dies

BOSTON. Bruce Bolling, the first black City Council president, died yesterday. He was 67.

Bolling, who left office in 1993, was battling prostate cancer, according to the Globe.

Among his accomplishments, Bolling spearheaded a requirement that downtown developers invest in affording housing and he also championed an ordinance that obligated city contractors to hire a certain percentage of Boston residents, women and minorities.

Councilor Felix Arroyo said Bolling was a "friend and mentor." Bolling is survived by his wife and son.

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S. Korea company sorry for late trains

MBTA PHOTO

▶ Acting General Manager Jonathan Davis inspects what will hopefully soon be your new Commuter Rail coach.

The head of the MBTA, who is currently in South Korea hunting down 75 double-decker commuter trains that were due over a year ago said yesterday that executives are "embarrassed" by the 18-month delay in delivering the trains.

MBTA Acting General Manager Jonathan Davis is overseas until Friday pushing executives at Hyundai Rotem for answers on the tardy trains.

Yesterday, Davis told the State House News Service that he got a "firm commitment" from CEO Min-ho Lee that the company would stick to the revised production and delivery schedule.

However, Davis is not so confident, saying: "The proof is in adhering to the schedule. Up to now, they have not been able to deliver. ... What I told them in the end is: Don't confuse efforts with results. We want to see the coaches delivered on the most recent schedule, and there can be no further slippage."

Davis said he has "a wrap-up meeting" with Lee scheduled today to debrief him.

"I will again be asking him to commit to the revised delivery schedule," Davis said.

Davis said he already had a "frank" discussion with Lee on Monday.

"Mr. Lee told me that in his entire career there, he never had an incident where the chief executive for the company they were manufacturing for actually had to visit the production facility," Davis told the State House News Service.

Davis also offered an apology to frustrated Commuter Rail riders.

"I want to apologize to our customers for this project being late," Davis told the State House News Service. "It is very vital to being able to provide service. However, those delays were not the result of any action by the MBTA, but completely Hyundai Rotem being unable to deliver."

The deal

Under the original $190 million contract signed with Hyundai Rotem, the company was supposed to deliver rail cars starting in the spring of 2011.

- In 2010, T officials agreed to push the time line back, with delivery dates beginning this past January.
- Only four pilot trains have been delivered so far.
- The MBTA has paid Hyundai Rotem $40 million to date.

MORGAN ROUSSEAU
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In the news

Sweeney Award goes to Wakefield man for rescue

A 53-year-old Wakefield man who rushed into a burning East Boston home was presented with the Madeline Amy Sweeney Award for Civilian Bravery yesterday.

Paul Antonino was recognized at a State House ceremony as a local hero, for running into the home in April to alert residents about the fire. Twenty-three adults and seven children who lived there escaped safely because of Antonino's response, officials said.

Sweeney was an American Airlines flight attendant and made calls to officials after her plane was hijacked on 9/11 until it flew into the World Trade Center. METRO

NICOLAUS CZARNECKI/METRO

▶ Volunteers joined with the Military Heroes Fund to assemble 1,000 care packages for military personnel.

Remembering to serve on 9/11

Scores of volunteers offer to help send care packages to troops Some came to donate time in honor of 9/11 victims, fallen soldiers

More than 3,000 people gave their lives in the attacks on 9/11 and thousands more made the ultimate sacrifice in the military actions following the event.

Yesterday, in an effort to honor those people who died because of the terrorist attacks, scores of people gathered at the Rose Kennedy Greenway and gave a little bit of their time on the 11th anniversary of 9/11.

"On a day like today, you have to contribute for all the people lost 11 years ago and people continuing to serve to help protect us. This is a good way to commit our time," said Kaela Gallo, 22, of Boston.

Gallo, who serves with AmeriCorps, was one of the scores of people who stood in line and helped assemble 1,000 care packages that will be sent to active duty service members stationed around the world.

The service project was organized by the Massachusetts Military Heroes Fund.

The packages contain essentials like socks, baby wipes and snacks.

They also include non-essentials like wristbands and Boston Bruins Stanley Cup souvenir pucks and — more meaningfully — handwritten letters.

"This is known as a depressing day, so I wanted to pay my respects," said Joden Agenor, 17, of Malden, as he sat on a bench on the Greenway writing a letter to a solider who will receive the package he helped assemble. "It's an honor and a privilege to do this."

The message of his letter was simple.

"To say thank you for everything," he said.

Carlos Arredondo, who poured gasoline on himself and caught fire in 2004 after Marine personnel told him his 20-year-old son was killed in Iraq, helped pick up discarded items as a volunteer yesterday.

"For myself, being here, it's an honor. It's a way to honor my son," said Arredondo, who lost his other son last year to suicide. "I've been seeing people make a difference today. I'm very glad people are doing it."

MICHAEL NAUGHTON
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Never. Forgetting

▶ Teresa Mathai touches the name of her husband, Joseph Mathai, on the Boston Public Garden 9/11 Memorial.

NICOLAUS CZARNECKI/METRO

Families remember 9/11 victims

Relatives and friends of the more than 200 local victims of the 9/11 attacks gathered at the memorial site in the Public Garden yesterday to pay tribute. Mayor Thomas Menino laid a wreath at the site and others left flowers or simply touched the name of a loved one. METRO

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In the news

Taliban raked in $400M from diverse sources

UNITED NATIONS. The Taliban raised about $400 million last year from sources that included donations, taxing local economies and extorting money from such targets as drug dealers, cell phone operators and aid projects, according to a U.N. report on the militant Islamist group released yesterday.

The report to the U.N. Security Council by the sanctions monitoring team said that about $275 million of that reached Taliban leadership and the rest was collected, spent or misappropriated at the local level.

REUTERS

Obama says 9/11 victims will never be forgotten

President Barack Obama said yesterday that the Sept. 11 victims would be remembered "no matter how many years pass," as Americans marked the 11th anniversary of the attacks in which nearly 3,000 people were killed by airliners hijacked by Islamist militants.

Two of the passenger jets brought down the Twin Towers of New York City's World Trade Center, another hit the Pentagon outside Washington and a fourth crashed in a field in Pennsylvania when passengers aboard that flight fought back against the hijackers.

Obama, speaking at the Pentagon where 184 people were killed, told victims' families that the whole country shares their loss.

"Eleven times we have paused in remembrance and reflection, in unity and in purpose," Obama said. "This is never an easy day, but it is especially difficult for all of you, the families of nearly 3,000 innocents who lost their lives."

> **"This is never an easy day, but it is especially difficult for all of you, the families of nearly 3,000 innocents who lost their lives"**
> PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

"But no matter how many years pass, no matter how many times we come together on this hallowed ground, know this: That you will never be alone, your loved ones will never be forgotten. They will endure in the hearts of our nation because through their sacrifice they helped us make the America we are today, an America that has emerged even stronger."

Speaking under clear blue skies that recalled the crisp morning of Sept. 11, 2001, Obama said America's fight is not with Islam but with al Qaeda, the group responsible for the attacks, and its allies.

REUTERS

POOL PHOTO

▶ At Ground Zero in New York where the towers once stood, the annual reading of the list of 2,983 people killed at the three sites began at 8:39 a.m. yesterday.

IRS awards $104m to UBS tax whistle-blower

WASHINGTON. U.S. tax authorities have awarded $104 million to a whistle-blower in a major tax fraud case against Swiss bank UBS AG that widened a government crackdown on Americans avoiding taxes in Switzerland, his lawyers said yesterday.

Bradley Birkenfeld, freed from prison, was not present at a news conference where his attorneys announced a reward made under an Internal Revenue Service whistle-blower program that has come in for some criticism in Congress.

Birkenfeld had sought a large payout for his role in a tax-dodging case that resulted in early 2009 in UBS entering into a deferred prosecution agreement and paying $780 million in fines, penalties, interest and restitution.

REUTERS

METRO FILE PHOTO

▶ Almost one year removed from the death of Apple co-founder Steve Jobs, the newest iPhone faces a growing army of competitors looking to grab a piece of a smartphone market.

Apple gambles with once a year launch of iPhone 5 today

Apple Inc.'s debut of its redesigned iPhone will test anew its high-stakes strategy of once-a-year upgrades for a product that accounts for about 70 percent of the company's profits.

The new phone, to be introduced today by Chief Executive Officer Tim Cook, will probably have a new hardware design, including a bigger screen and thinner body, as well as new mapping software and compatibility with speedier next-generation data networks. Analysts predict the iPhone may be among the biggest consumer-electronics releases in history. Still, Apple's reliance on the device leaves Cook little margin for error.

"The iPhone is the make-or-break product for Apple," said Sarah Rotman Epps, a mobile-phone industry analyst at Forrester Research. "Apple has the undeniable lead, but to stay on top they need to keep innovating."

BLOOMBERG

"Apple has the undeniable lead, but to stay on top they need to keep innovating."
SARAH ROTMAN EPPS

New iPhone could boost GDP by 0.5

The next generation iPhone could not only boost the tech giant's bottom line, but could give a significant boost to the overall U.S. economy.

Sales of the new iPhone could add between a quarter and a half percentage point to fourth-quarter annualized growth in the U.S., according to J.P. Morgan's chief economist, Michael Feroli, in a note to clients on Monday.

Such an impact would be significant.

"Calculated using the so-called retail control method, sales of iPhone 5 could boost annualized GDP growth by $3.2 billion, or $12.8 billion at an annual rate," Feroli wrote. That 0.33 percentage-point boost, he added, "would limit the downside risk to our Q4 GDP growth protection, which remains 2.0 percent."

REUTERS

In the news

Pirate Bay founder extradited to Sweden

STOCKHOLM. A co-founder of the free file-sharing website Pirate Bay was extradited to Sweden yesterday to begin a one-year jail sentence for breaching copyright laws and was held by authorities as part of a separate investigation into hacking.

Gottfrid Svartholm Warg, a 27-year-old Swede, fled to Cambodia after being convicted in 2009 of Internet piracy in Sweden. He was arrested in late August and extradited on Monday.

On arrival in Stockholm, Warg was detained on suspicion of hacking into computers at a company that manages data for the Swedish tax authority.

REUTERS

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In the news

Secret Syria strike helps Israel signal resolve on Iran

JERUSALEMS. An Israeli cabinet minister yesterday invoked his country's ostensibly secret 2007 air raid on an alleged Syrian nuclear reactor to suggest Israel could successfully strike Iran without the support of the U.S.

Israel has never formally acknowledged the bombing of the desert site at Deir al-Zor, nor said what was destroyed — a precaution against drawing Syria into a retaliatory war, according to then-U.S. President George W. Bush, who in his memoir described the target as a nascent, North Korean-supplied reactor. **REUTERS**

'Titanic' special effects company goes bankrupt

Digital Domain Media Group Inc., an Academy Award-winning company that produced special effects for films including "Titanic," filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection early yesterday, according to a court filing.

Digital Domain, whose founders included "Titanic" director James Cameron, listed total debt of $214.9 million and total assets of $205.0 million, the court filing showed.

The company, which specializes in creating realistic computer-generated humans, said in June it was planning multiple virtual Elvis Presley likenesses across various platforms, including live shows, TV and online. **REUTERS**

Egyptians angry at film scale US embassy walls

KHALED DESOUKI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

▶ Egyptians protest outside the U.S. embassy in Cairo yesterday.

Egyptian protesters scaled the walls of the U.S. embassy yesterday, tore down the American flag and burned it during a protest over what they said was a film being produced in the United States that insulted Prophet Mohammad.

In place of the U.S. flag, the protesters tried to raise a black flag with the words "There is no God but God, and Mohammad is his messenger," a Reuters witness said.

Once the U.S. flag was hauled down, some protesters tore it up and showed pieces to cameras. Others burned the remains outside the fortress-like embassy building in central Cairo. But some protesters objected to the flag-burning.

Many Muslims consider any depiction of the Prophet to be offensive.

"This movie must be banned immediately, and an apology should be made," said 19-year-old Ismail Mahmoud, a member of the so-called "ultras" soccer supporters who played a big role in the uprising that brought down Hosni Mubarak last year.

He called on President Mohamed Mursi, Egypt's first civilian president and an Islamist, to take action, without giving details of the film that angered him or other protesters. **REUTERS**

2,000

About 20 people stood on top of the embassy wall, while about 2,000 protesters gathered outside. The demonstrators were mainly supporters of Islamist groups or "ultras" youths.

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News in brief

Chicago teacher strike could give Obama headache

CHICAGO. The Chicago teachers' strike is putting President Barack Obama's re-election campaign in a bind, pitting unions loyal to him against officials with ties to the White House. The Obama camp needs to be careful not to upset the unions, which it needs for campaign funds and to do ground work leading up to the Nov. 6 election, while not alienating independent voters who are worried about the Democrats being too close to powerful labor groups.

While not directly involved, Obama is associated in many minds with local politics in his hometown, where one of his current cabinet members, Education Secretary Arne Duncan, formerly oversaw the schools and now endorses the changes that have angered teachers. And Mayor Rahm Emanuel is a former Obama chief of staff. **REUTERS**

▶ The teachers' strike comes at a bad time for Obama.

SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES

Romney's vouchers system could take years to begin

Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney wants to turn Medicare into a voucher system, and President Barack Obama hopes that fact alone will help him win votes among senior citizens and baby boomers.

But health policy experts, including two analysts who first floated the idea of Medicare vouchers 17 years ago, say no such plan is likely to become legislation — let alone law — until after the next presidential election in 2016.

That's because the mere notion of fundamentally revamping the $590 billion-a-year health-care program, which serves 50 million elderly and disabled Americans, raises a multitude of policy issues that no politician or policymaker has addressed publicly. **REUTERS**

Boehner says he's not confident about avoiding 'fiscal cliff'

U.S. House of Representatives Speaker John Boehner voiced concern yesterday that a divided Washington may be unable to avoid a looming "fiscal cliff" at the end of this year that could push the country into a recession.

"I'm not confident at all," Boehner, the top Republican in Congress, said of the chances of success by Capitol Hill and the White House to resolve a number of fiscal issues, including expiring tax hikes for millions of Americans and automatic spending cuts, known as a sequester, totalling $1.2 trillion that will begin to go into effect in January.

"The House has done its job on both the sequester and on the looming tax hike that will cost our economy 700,000 jobs. The Senate at some point has to act. And on both of these, where's the president, where's the leadership?" Boehner asked.

Business leaders and economists have warned that allowing the across-the-board spending cuts to go into effect at a time when tax cuts enacted in 2001 and 2003 will also expire could drain the struggling U.S. economy of spending power.

Few political experts expect Congress to tackle the issues along with huge federal budget deficits and debt before the Nov. 6 presidential and congressional elections.

Moody's Investors Service said yesterday that the United States may lose its triple-A debt rating if budget negotiations failed to reduce the record U.S. debt, which recently topped $16 trillion.

Rival ratings agency Standard & Poor's stripped the United States of its top ratings last year after Congress failed to come up with a long-term deficit reduction plan and political fighting brought the country to the brink of default. **REUTERS**

ROLL CALL/GETTY IMAGES

▶ Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, conducts a news conference after a meeting of the House Republican Caucus in the Capitol.

"The House has done its job on both the sequester and on the looming take hike. ... Where's the president, where's the leadership?"
BOEHNER

Metropolitik

CONN CARROLL
SENIOR EDITORIAL WRITER FOR THE WASHINGTON EXAMINER

THEY LOVED CLINTON, NOT OBAMA

Two more polls, two more pieces of evidence that the Democratic National Convention gave President Barack Obama's re-election campaign a big boost. First, according to CNN, Obama now leads Romney 52 percent to 46 percent among likely voters. Before the conventions, CNN had Obama up 49-47. Second, according to The Washington Post, Obama now leads Romney 49 percent to 48 percent among likely voters. Immediately prior to the conventions, Romney led by 2 points.

So what exactly about the Democratic Convention did Americans love so much? Not Obama. According to Gallup, which currently shows Obama's convention bounce at about 2 points, only 43 percent of adults thought Obama's convention speech was "excellent." The rest of America either thought it was "OK" (17 percent), "terrible" (16 percent), or had no opinion (24 percent). Independents had even lower opinions of Obama, with just 35 percent rating the speech "excellent" while 39 percent said it was "OK" or "terrible."

Now contrast those numbers with former-President Bill Clinton, whose speech was rated "excellent" by a full 56 percent of American adults. That's 13 points better than Obama's performance. To the extent that Democrats got a bounce out of their convention, it is not an Obama bounce. It is a Clinton bounce.

Quoted

Clinton managed to "work his will" and form bipartisan compromises. ... Obama, on the other hand, has completely failed to work with today's Congressional conservatives.

In his new book, "The Price of Politics," Bob Woodward writes, "It is a fact that President Obama was handed a miserable, faltering economy and faced a recalcitrant Republican opposition. But presidents work their will — or should work their will — on important matters of national business. ... Obama has not."

Clinton managed to "work his will" and form bipartisan compromises with then-Speaker Newt Gingrich, who no one has ever accused of being shy about practicing partisan politics.

Obama, on the other hand, has completely failed to work with today's Congressional conservatives. The American people will eventually figure this out.

— Conn Carroll (ccarroll@washingtonexaminer.com) is a senior editorial writer for The Washington Examiner. Follow him on Twitter at @conncarroll.

Metro does not endorse the opinions of the author, or any opinions expressed on its pages. Opposing viewpoints are welcome. Send 100-word submissions to letters@metro.us.

myentertainment

THE WORD

Metro's **Monica Weymouth** shares her take on the world of gossip @monicaatmetro monica.weymouth@metro.us

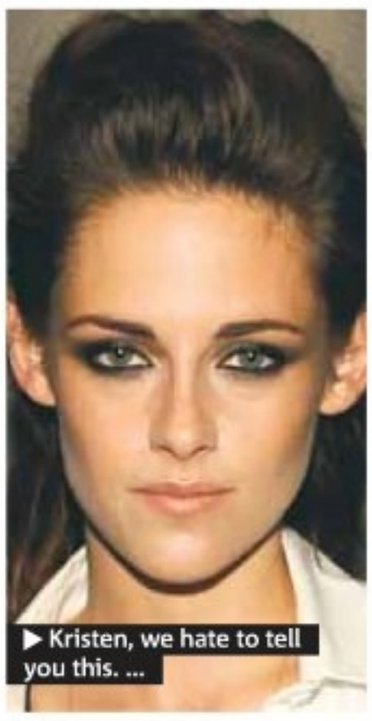
James Franco chatting up Kristen Stewart?

ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Although she's still shuffling through airports in **Robert Pattinson**'s T-shirts, it seems **Kristen Stewart** may be entertaining the idea of moving on. The actress was spotted chatting with a "smitten" **James Franco** at the Toronto Film Festival, reports RadarOnline.

"There was a lot of flirting, and Kristen was overjoyed by the attention she was getting from James, who was gushing over her, saying what a great actress he thinks she is, and was full of praise for her latest movie, 'On the Road,'" a source tells the site. "At the end of their chance meeting, James took Kristen's number and asked her out for dinner. Kristen initially said no but is mulling over the idea. She knows she has to move on now following her breakup with Rob." (Is it just us, or does this "source" sound like Kristen Stewart giving herself a pep talk in the bathroom mirror?)

Now, we wouldn't have initially put Franco and Stewart together, but maybe they can bond over complaining about fame while taking roles in blockbusters. Plus, Franco's so pretentious these days, we bet he has a stronger British accent than Pattinson.



▶ Kristen, we hate to tell you this. ...

▶ But this is not what we'd call an upgrade.

Never change, Tara Reid

They just don't make them like **Tara Reid** anymore. The sometimes-actress, always-party girl was caught on camera stumbling around St. Tropez last weekend like it was spring break 1998. In quite possibly the drunkest three minutes we've seen this side of college, the actress fell into a row of motorcycles, brought a friend down with her and then just barely boarded a yacht, all without even a flicker of shame.

Lindsay Lohan, you better up your game.

Chris Brown is killing us

Chris Brown is sporting a questionable new neck tattoo — even for Chris Brown, even for a neck tattoo. The singer's latest ink depicts what appears to be the bruised face of a woman who looks suspiciously similar to **Rihanna**, whom he was convicted of assaulting three years ago. Brown's publicist is denying that the tattoo is of Rihanna, as if that somehow makes it classier.

Alley attempts Cruise control

Longtime Scientologist **Kirstie Alley** is coming to **Tom Cruise**'s defense after Vanity Fair published an article alleging that the church acts as his eerie matchmaking service.

"Whenever you have articles written that are third and fourth parties' opinions, it's like the game Gossip and you don't get the truth. I think that a magazine of that caliber should have interviewed him, and then they would get the truth," Alley told "Entertainment Tonight."

Vanity Fair, for the record, did their duty as a "magazine of caliber" and reached out to Camp Cruise.

Metro, for the record, thinks Tom Cruise is a beautiful alien sent here to learn our ways and steal our hair products.

Talking points

Obama saw through Nicki Minaj's lyrics

Minaj

While many people thought **Nicki Minaj**'s lyrics about supporting Republican presidential candidate **Mitt Romney** were sincere, at least one fan wasn't worried: **President Barack Obama** himself. "I'm not sure that's actually what happened," Obama says in an interview with an Orlando radio station. "I think she had a song on there, a little rap that said that. But she likes to play different characters, so I don't know what's going on there." Minaj herself took to Twitter to confirm Obama's suspicions. "Ha! Thank you for understanding my creative humor and sarcasm, Mr. President. The smart ones always do," she tweeted.

Blake Lively just lived out your fantasy, ladies

As details of **Blake Lively** and **Ryan Reynolds**' weekend wedding surface, it's becoming clear just how romantic the couple is. For the location of their nuptials, they chose the South Carolina house used in the film "The Notebook," according to People magazine. They began planning the wedding a month ago, with Lively reportedly only telling her "Gossip Girl" bosses that she needed time off three weeks ago.

▶ Crow

Sheryl Crow blames phone for tumor

Sheryl Crow developed a benign brain tumor earlier this year, and she thinks it may be all her cell phone's fault. "There are no doctors that will confirm that. [But] I do have the theory that it's possible that it's related to that," Crow tells **Katie Couric** in an interview. "I [used to spend] hours on the old archaic cell phones." Crow explains that the location of the tumor was suspiciously close to where she used to hold the phone.

2

The feed ...

▶ Checking in with some of Hollywood's biggest names to see what they've been up to — in their own words, in 140 characters or fewer.

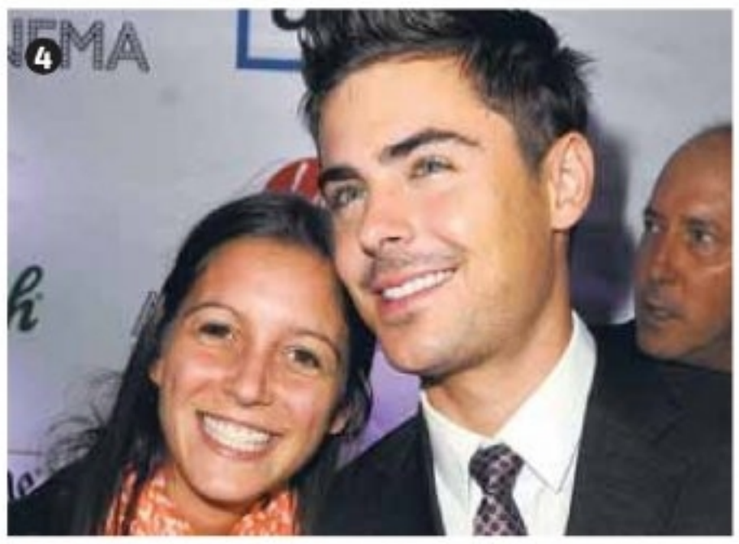
@Joan_Rivers
I love Fashion Week in New York. Everyone is so chic! I just saw a bag lady wearing a pantsuit made from old "Will Work For Food" signs.

@SteveMartinToGo
Ah, summer's almost over and fall is almost setting in. Which proves that you can tweet anything.

@danieltosh
if you have ever typed "sorry not sorry" i hope you die... not sorry.

@mindykaling
Eating poorly at healthy restaurants is kind of my jam

Mindy Kaling



Gaga dresses down and Zac gets cozy with a fan

1 Not even the royals can top this hat: **Lady Gaga** was spotted in London earlier this week looking, all things considered, closer to human than usual.

2 **Michael Stipe** was looking a little lost on the red carpet at The **Mario Batali** Foundation Inaugural Honors Dinner. Our best guess: He was fresh off a run-in with fellow attendee **Rachael Ray**.

3 **Ewan McGregor** and **Naomi Watts** hit the red carpet for their new film, "The Impossible," at the Toronto Film Festival on Sunday night.

4 Are you seriously telling us that **Zac Efron** snuggled up to some random fan at the Toronto Film Festival? Our heart — it will never go on.

5 **Tony Hawk** still has it — on the board and in the skinny jeans. The skateboarder did an episode of "Town Hall" with SiriusXM on Monday, then hit the streets of New York.

1. NEIL MOCKFORD/FILMMAGIC
2. DAVE KOTINSKY/GETTY IMAGESES
3. JASON MERRITT/GETTY IMAGES
4. ERNESTO DISTEFANO/GETTY IMAGES
5. HARAV SEGEV

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Do they have the 'X Factor'?

A new crop of singers shoots for stardom • But all eyes will be on judges Britney Spears and Demi Lovato when Season 2 premieres • What Simon Cowell's new tablemates bring to the show

Simon says:
"I'm not going to lie about this. I always said the No. 1 person I always wanted on one of these [singing competition] shows was Britney," Cowell admits. "She's a really, really good judge. Britney's quite mean, which you'll discover."

Britney Spears

Why she joined the show:
Spears began thinking about the show thanks to an unlikely source — the makeup artist she shares with Cowell. "We talked about ['The X Factor'] a couple of times when I was on tour, but really never took it seriously until she went back and she started working for him," Spears says of the go-between. "Then we just all met up, and it made sense."

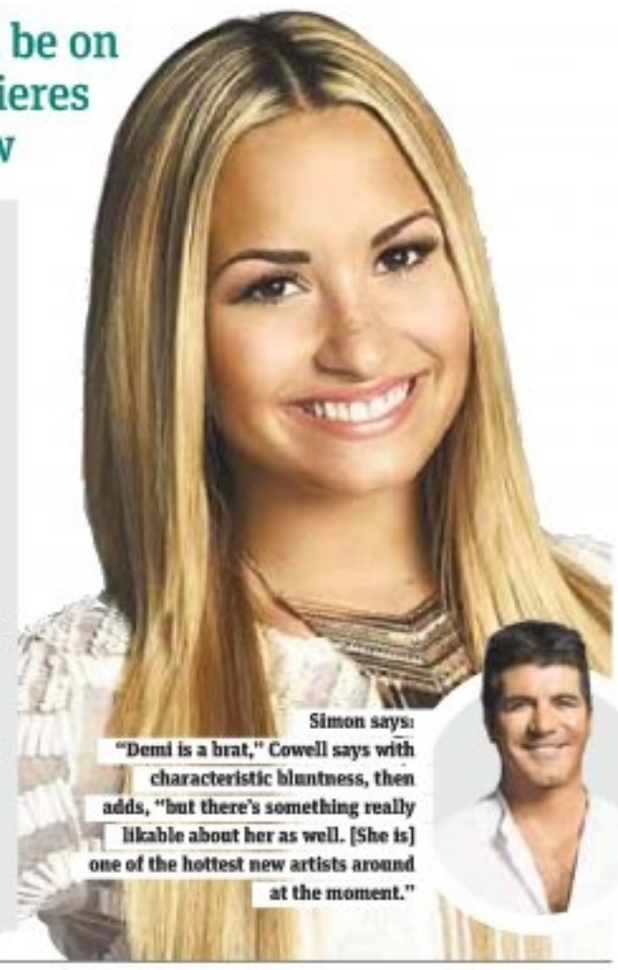
What she brings:
Few have weathered the ups and downs of stardom the way Spears has. "I've been able to help this talent come in and achieve their dream, and I can relate to them ... because I started out at such a young age. I know the foundation and the depth of what you go through [to achieve] your dream," she says.

AMBER RAY
amber.ray@metro.us

Demi Lovato

Why she joined the show:
Lovato had dreams of auditioning for "American Idol" — not that the former Disney star needed that show to achieve fame — but found her way onto a reality competition regardless. "By the time that I turned 19, here I am sitting on the panel with [Cowell, the former 'Idol' judge]. I never thought that I would be doing this. It's such an honor."

What she brings:
Lovato — who has worked in the industry for 10 years, or half her life — views her youth as an advantage. "The expertise that I'm able to contribute is ... I know what my friends like," she says. "We're in our early 20s and late teens, and it's a really interesting thing when you bring a much younger demographic into the competition. [Teens are] really great judges. We know what is needed in this industry."
"The X Factor" premieres tonight at 8 on Fox.



Simon says:
"Demi is a brat," Cowell says with characteristic bluntness, then adds, "but there's something really likable about her as well. [She is] one of the hottest new artists around at the moment."

PHOTOS: NINO MUÑOZ / FOX

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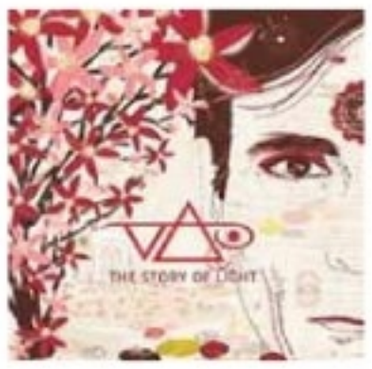
At the speed of Vai

On 'The Story of Light,' legendary guitarist Steve Vai explores some strange and beautiful six-stringed terrain ◆ Come get depolarized



Amsterdam and Aimee Mann

On "No More Amsterdam," Vai enlists former Berklee classmate Aimee Mann to share the twirling duet.

"At face value, you'd think something like that would never work," says Vai, "but it was a beautiful collaboration."

The first item on Steve Vai's CV is "stunt guitarist," a title given to him at age 19 by avant-garde maestro Frank Zappa, who had enlisted the prodigious young guitar wiz right out of college (Berklee, natch) to play some "impossible guitar parts." Now, with the release "The Story of Light," Vai is three illustrious decades down the road. While guitar parts remain impossible to the layfingered, the charlatan stunting of youth has clearly evolved into legitimate miracle-working, as "Light" reveals a careful, if not vibrantly colorful, composer.

"My fans can be really polarized," says Vai, "because some of them are very interested in having me just play guitar or heavy-rock instrumental songs, and some of them really like the dense compositional stuff, and some of them like the vocal ballads."

Not a man to disappoint, Vai offers all options on "Light." Moments in Celtic ballad "Mullach A'tSi" have the feathery touch of a grandmother's lullaby. Granny exits the room elsewhere, though, on songs like the title track or "Gravity Storm," where Vai reminds us of his guitar superheroism, and on the bombastic "John The Revelator" featuring "The Voice" finalist Beverly McClellan. A new kind of treat, "Creamsicle Sunset" is all glimmering, woozy sweetness.

To dismiss this album as "instrumental rock guitar" is to say that Charlie's visit to the Chocolate Factory is about a kid who goes to a manufacturing plant. There's a lot of tasty candy here for those who are willing to explore.

JIM FENNER
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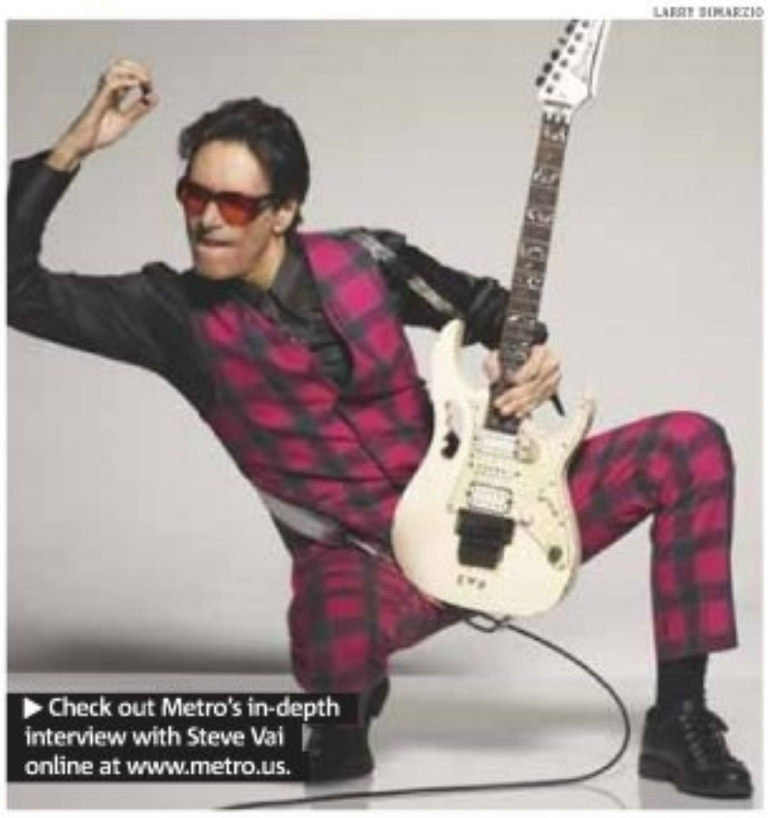
LARRY DIMARZIO



▶ Check out Metro's in-depth interview with Steve Vai online at www.metro.us.

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Wigging out about 'Marie'

You can have your cake and eat it too with this 'Antoinette,' the ART's co-production with Yale Repertory Theatre Actress Brooke Bloom is a delight

JOAN MARCUS

▶ Seriously, let them eat cake — Brooke Bloom is hilarious and heartbreaking in the title role of "Marie Antoinette."

Lambasting the 1 percent has become a favorite pastime for Americans. Even "Marie Antoinette," the American Repertory Theater's stunning co-production with Yale Repertory Theatre, initially feels like it's jumping on that bandwagon.

But playwright David Adjmi offers much more than a few barbs on behalf of the rest of us in this brilliant treatise on one of the most famous royals in the history of the French monarchy.

Born to be a queen, the 18th-century "rich kid" is played to perfection by Brooke Bloom, who turns her into a funny, likable hybrid of Paris Hilton and Princess Diana.

Plot points

Though the delightfully vapid, privileged existence of a young royal might seem appealing, Marie Antoinette is ultimately beheaded by angry revolutionaries tired of crippling debt and an incompetent, elitist government.

While the ditzy blonde fashionista delivers lines like "let them eat cake" with impeccable comedic timing, she also shines when the queen has been stripped of everything and forced to look at more than her reflection in the mirror.

This humanizing transition of the out-of-touch queen is heartbreaking, fascinating theater. Almost instantly, the extravagant party girl with a largely undeserved reputation for promiscuity finds herself having her hair chopped off by captors. Her subtle reaction to the assessment that it's the rich who can't take care of themselves and later declaration that she had no choices with her own life are "aha" moments for those on both sides of the percent sign.

Director Rebecca Taichman nicely avoids getting heavy-handed with contemporary comparisons, opting instead to simply tell the story from its majestic beginning to its tragic end.

If you go

'Marie Antoinette'
Through Sept. 29
American Repertory Theater
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$25-$65, 617-547-8300
www.americanrepertorytheater.org

Gabriel Berry's breathtaking costumes and Riccardo Hernandez's extraordinary set deserve the applause they got as the curtain rose at this performance, but their greatest effect is the way they enhance both the comic and tragic elements of the life of "Marie Antoinette."

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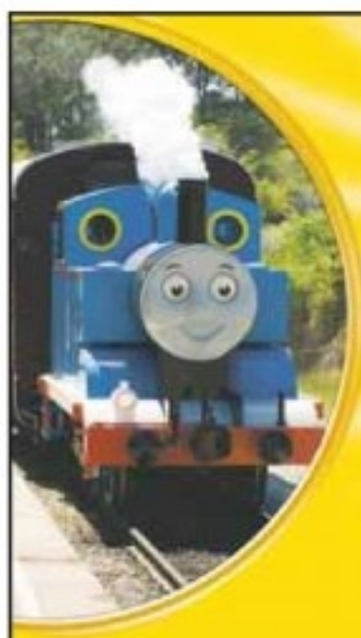

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Fall gaming preview

With a new Wii device and a slew of cutting-edge games, autumn brings with it plenty of things to keep even the most avid gamer busy

The gang's all here in "PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale."

Sidescroller

LAWRENCE BONK
LAWRENCE.BONK@METRO.US

Summer is typically a dry season for the gaming industry. The big publishers, safe in their illusion that gamers actually go outside, hold big releases for fall. Guess what? Summer is over and the new games are on their way.

Nintendo Wii U
Release date: November
Nintendo's follow-up to its massively successful Wii is almost upon us. The hook? A big touchscreen controller (think iPad) that is not only used as a second screen but also can be used to stream games when someone else wants the TV.

'Halo 4'
Console: Xbox 360
Release date: Nov. 6
There's no better respected name in first-person shooters than "Halo" — Master Chief single-handedly put Microsoft on the home console map. On the docket for the first installment of this new trilogy? A four-player cooperative story mode that is split up into episodes like a television show.

'PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale'
Console: PS3/Vita
Release date: Nov. 20
Sony is getting into the mascot fighter genre that has been Nintendo's bread and butter. Imitation aside, it still looks like a fun fighting game that will remind you just how deep Sony's bench is. PaRappa the Rapper, Ratchet, Clank and even Nathan Drake are here.

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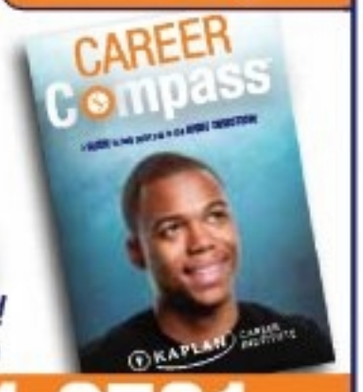
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NYC Fashion Week reviews

1

2

1 Tommy Hilfiger: Tommy Hilfiger transported show-goers at the High Line back to the Hamptons for one last seaside soiree — a Fourth of July-type celebration. With hurricane lanterns hanging over a deck-like runway, models sailed by in bold red, white and blue striped looks. Some read cool (the double-breasted blazers and chunky cardigans) and others too patriotic (a preppy navy jacket over a red, white and blue striped shirt and trousers). The colors then came in zigzags on dresses and one-piece halter swimsuits before winding up on the trim of plain white shifts. Breton stripes were also big (on cotton schoolboy shirts and leather tops), as were chunky cable-knit sweaters. It's what Hilfiger imagines women like Jackie O wore while setting sail oversees. We definitely see the jitney — and city streets— filled with his breezy trapeze dresses. TINA CHADHA

2 DKNY: For her Spring show, titled "Reflections of New York," Donna Karan aimed to define a girl living the big-city dream. She's ambitious (smart work-wear separates like boyfriend blazers and knee-grazing pencil skirts came in leather and color-blocked, textured linen); she's ready for whatever comes her way (the bodysuit played double duty as a bathing suit, and models wore fanny packs); she's street smart (sporty mesh and leather detailing, camo prints, fitted black baseball caps and heeled sneakers exuded an urban tone); and, of course, she knows how to have a good time (bikini tops peeked under blazers, and floor-length jersey dresses featured slits up-to-there). The standouts in this collection, however, were the slouchy all-American blue jeans and effortlessly cool anoraks, which, let's face it, are the ultimate NYC uniform. TC

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Why you need to have more sex

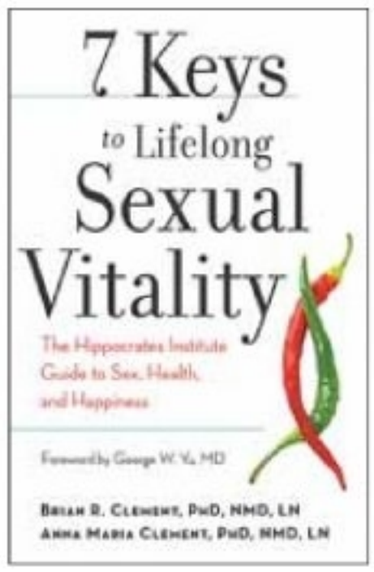
The benefits go beyond those final moments of ecstasy ◗ Why Viagra should stay out of your cabinet

According to Brian Clement, N.M.D., Ph.D., L.N. and the director of the Hippocrates Health Institute in West Palm Beach, Fla., "Sexual vitality is important to a healthy body and to mental well-being, but social and religious oppression has turned it into something bad."

Dr. Clement's latest book, "7 Keys to Lifelong Sexual Vitality," co-authored with the Hippocrates Institute's co-director, his wife Anna Maria Clement, N.M.D., Ph.D., L.N., strives to debunk sexual stigmas and put us on track to having great sex — for our entire lives. And that doesn't mean resorting to Viagra or any other drug.

"That's the synthetic answer," he says. "Most of the Viagra taken is by young guys aged 20 to 28 using it as a recreational drug. By the time they're 35 or 40, they won't be able to perform sexually. Our book talks about sustainable intimacy without the mental, religious or social stigma."

According to the book, a healthy lifestyle aids sexual health. In return, healthy sex strengthens the immune system, relieves stress and depression, lowers blood pressure and more. "Sex floods the body with good hormones," says Dr. Clement. "Your self-image improves, your mental well-being improves. Sexual repression causes many mental health problems."



LINDA CLARKE
letters@metro.us

LIFESIZE

▶ Yes, this is good for you — thank you, universe.

Dr. Clement's keys to super sex:

- Proper nutrition
- Detoxification
- Exercise
- Strong communication with your partner
- And ... wheatgrass? "Wheatgrass will do more to enhance people's sex lives than Viagra," he says. "I guarantee it."

Health notes

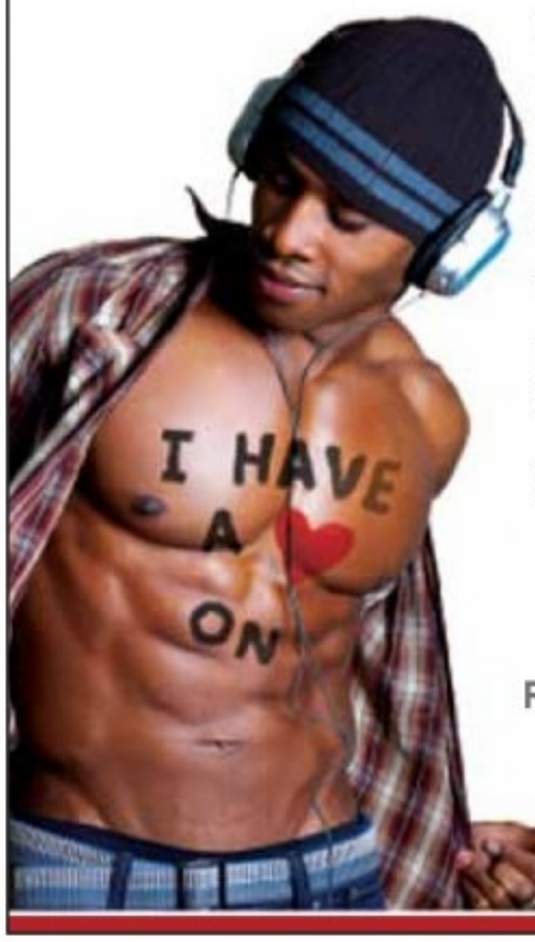
Donate your kicks

If you're running this Sunday's Boston 13.1 Marathon, bring your old sneakers so you can drop them off with Give Your Sole, a nonprofit that's donating the old shoes to the Boston Rescue Mission. You can also donate them when you pick up your race-day materials on Friday (noon-7 p.m.) or at Fast: Splits Multisport on Saturday (10 a.m.-6 p.m.). If you donate, you'll get a free pair of flip-flops so you don't have to walk home barefoot!

Free yoga!

Athleta (92 Newbury St., 617-587-9830) is hosting a slew of activities for National Yoga Month. Pop by on Saturdays for complimentary yoga classes, and visit **www.athleta.com/yogamonth** each day for tips, classes, giveaways and activities. MEREDITH ENGEL

GET YOUR HEART ON
VOLUNTEER FOR AN HIV VACCINE STUDY



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Today in medicine

Video game violence dulls pain

Study subjects: 40 people
Location of study: U.K.
Results: Keele University found that after 10 minutes of playing video games, participants experienced a 65-percent increase in tolerance to pain stimuli — holding their hands in iced water — than before they played.
Significance: The researchers think the higher tolerance to pain could be the result of our fight-or-flight response to stressful situations, and a quicker heartbeat.

Latinos have higher diabetes risk

Study subjects: Overweight white, black and Latino adults
Location of study: U.S.
Results: A multiracial study at Cedars-Sinai Hospital found that Latinos were more likely to store fat in the pancreas and were less able to produce adequate amounts of insulin.
Significance: The study is part of research to prevent diabetes and to find out why some obese people develop Type 2 diabetes and others don't. One factor could be that a healthy pancreas creates more insulin to compensate for high blood sugar levels.

PIXLAND

▶ Playing video games may weaken sensitivity.

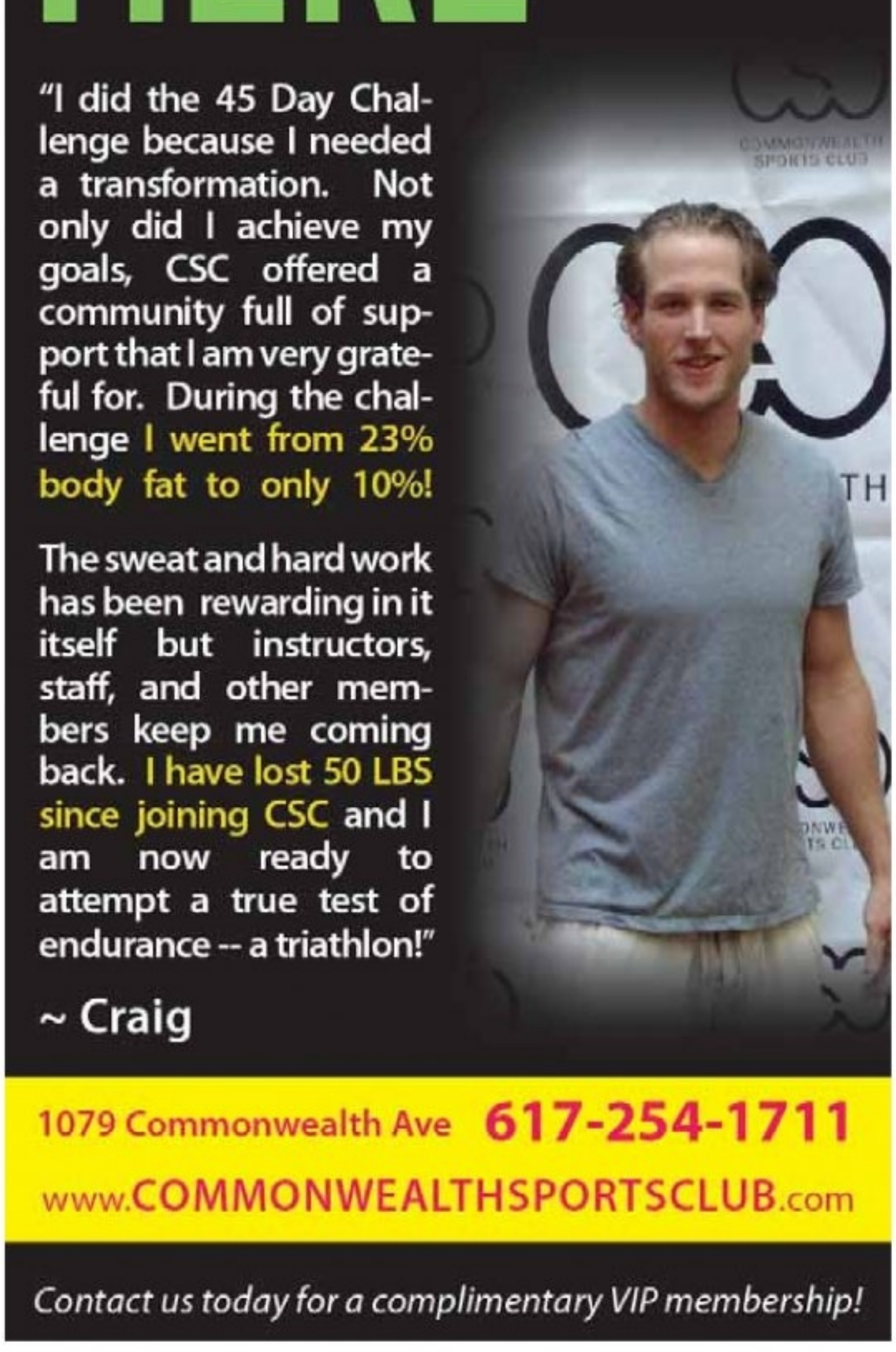
Cocoa's benefits

Study subjects: 2,575 people
Location of study: U.S.
Results: Research out of Harvard found that eating cocoa may decrease blood pressure, improve blood vessel health and improve cholesterol levels. Consumption of cocoa, which is rich in flavonoids, may also lessen one's risk of diabetes.
Significance: Don't unwrap that Hershey's bar just yet: Lead researcher Eric Ding advises "low calorie sources of cocoa flavonoids or supplemental cocoa flavonoids" to get your fill.

Infertility and BMI

Study subjects: 276 mature in vitro fertilization-resistant human eggs
Location of study: U.S.
Results: Researchers from Brigham and Women's Hospital found that 60 percent of eggs from obese women tested had more than one spindle (one is the norm), while 35 percent from the normal BMI group had more than one. Even among the single-spindled eggs, 30 percent from the obese group had disorganized chromosomes versus 9 percent of the healthy-weight women.
Significance: "This study is the first to shed light on how BMI might adversely affect egg quality in women," says study leader Dr. Catherine Racowsky.

LINDA CLARKE



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▶ Think beyond the usuals for your next source of carbs.

5 trendy, healthy ancient grains

Move over, wheat, rice and corn — crops like millet and amaranth are back in vogue, thanks to their outstanding nutritional profiles and complex flavors. Here are five old-fashioned grains that will bring new life to your dinner plate.

Farro
Sometimes referred to as "spelt" or "hulled wheat," this chewy, nutty grain is an early variety of wheat that has fed Mediterranean populations for thousands of years. Farro is a terrific source of fiber, which helps lower cholesterol by interfering with its absorption in the gut. Farro makes a terrific base for a salad — just combine with chopped veggies and a simple vinaigrette dressing.

Buckwheat
Buckwheat is not actually wheat or a grain, but rather a fruit seed. It's gluten-free, unlike true wheat. Unroasted buckwheat has a soft, mild flavor, while the roasted variety (kasha) has an earthy, nutty taste. For a nutrient-rich fall breakfast, whip up a batch of buckwheat pancakes and top with warm sautéed apples.

Millet
Archaeological evidence suggests that the ancient Chinese may have farmed millet before rice. The grains are tiny, round and can be white, gray, yellow or red. Animal studies suggest that millet may help lower cholesterol and triglyceride levels, which may in turn reduce risk for heart disease. Lightly toast millet before cooking to enhance its nutty flavor, then use to make a delicious pilaf with veggies and chopped nuts.

Teff
Teff is believed to have originated in Ethiopia, where many of the top marathon runners in the world rely on it as nutritional fuel. It beats out all other grains as the best source of calcium and also provides a good dose of magnesium, another bone-strengthening mineral. With its mild, nutty and slightly sweet flavor, teff flour is a nice addition to muffin, pancake and quick bread batters and a common ingredient in gluten-free baked goods.

*— For more tips on healthy eating, follow **Joy Bauer** on Facebook and Twitter (@joybauer) and visit **www.joybauer.com**.*

Joy's healthy bite

JOY BAUER
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Amaranth

This "grain" is not actually a grain, but rather a seed. Amaranth is a terrific vegetarian source of iron — a one-cup serving provides 30 percent of the daily requirement. Iron ensures a healthy oxygen flow to all of your body's cells, so getting enough is important for fighting fatigue and keeping your immune system on high alert. A bowl of creamy, hot amaranth cereal is a terrific alternative to your usual oatmeal. Just add 1 cup amaranth to 3 cups boiling water and simmer over low heat for about 25 minutes.

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Letters

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Dems picking all the wrong friends

RE: "LOVE'S LABORS LOST TO LEFT HATE-SLINGING" (METRO, SEPT. 10) After reading about all the hatred against Mia Love, you would think the same Democrats who claim to be champions of women and minorities would be denouncing the hatemongers. No surprise that the same Democrats who claim to be pro-woman support Bill Maher and rap music. They were silent when Obama was taking "donations" from Maher, the CAIR and a rapper who calls women "bitches." As for race, could you imagine what would happen if someone did the same thing to Michelle Obama's Wikipedia page? Democrats hate women and minorities who can think for themselves because the DNC still idolizes racists like Robert Byrd and Al Sharpton. **ROCCO LORE, VIA E-MAIL**

It's a real shame that some people don't want people such as Mia Love to express themselves. That is what this country is supposed to be about: diversity of thought and respect for each other's opinions and ideas. **BARBARA TARVYDAS, VIA E-MAIL**

To hateful mouths: Insert left foot

RE: "COLUMN RAISES KANE ON HOW BOTH SIDES TREAT FEMALE POLS" (METRO, SEPT. 11) Letter writer Douglas Brown manages to shoot himself in the foot quite nicely in the Sept. 11 letters. After whining about how the right-wing conservatives (or "wrong-wing conservatives," as he calls them) are the ones who taught the left how to hate, he brings up one of the most obvious cases of left-hate paranoia in recent years: the shooting of Gabby Giffords. Of course, he doesn't mention Giffords by name — nor Sarah Palin, who the left immediately blamed for the shooting spree of Jared Loughner, who was revealed to have no political motive for his insane actions.

But that's the loving left: Once they start with an an accusation, they just keep repeating it until they even believe it themselves. **FRANK DIXON, VIA E-MAIL**

Douglas Brown thinks that people shouldn't call each other names based on political views, then proceeds to do just that. Have you ever seen greater hypocrisy? It's clear that there are ignorant name-callers on both sides of the bipartisan divide. If playing "he-said, she-said" is your political game of choice, then you are part of the problem and no one is going to want to hear about any of your solutions. **HANS HAUGEN, VIA E-MAIL**

Dems like freedom of this press

I have finally come to the realization as to why Metro letter writers are all liberals: The paper is free. **LARRY DELICATA, VIA E-MAIL**

Quite a long-term lesson plan

RE: "HELPING THEM REMEMBER TO NEVER FORGET" (METRO, SEPT. 11) I don't mean to lessen the importance of 9/11, but is it really laudable for an English teacher to devote an entire year to teaching it? As opposed to teaching, say, English? I sincerely hope that was just hyperbole on your part. **MARY SMITH, VIA E-MAIL**

E-mail your letters: **letters@metro.us**

Keep them as brief as possible, preferably under 100 words.
Metro reserves the right to edit all letters.
Please include your name and contact information.

Horoscope

♍ Virgo **Aug. 23-Sept. 22.** An important commercial involvement is not likely to be conducted along conventional lines. However, this departure from traditional methods could present you with a great opportunity.

♎ Libra **Sept. 23-Oct. 23.** Although you might get paired up with a new and unfamiliar partner in order to pursue a mutual interest, you'll enjoy every minute of it.

♏ Scorpio **Oct. 24-Nov. 22.** our chances for success will be greatly enhanced if you truly enjoy what you are doing. It will be up to you, however, to make the love of your task the motivating factor.

♐ Sagittarius **Nov. 23-Dec. 21.** Establish lofty objectives for yourself, regardless of how far-fetched they may appear to be to your companions. You'll perform better if you feel you have to push yourself a bit.

♑ Capricorn **Dec. 22-Jan. 19.** Don't lose faith, even if the going gets tough. Things should work out to your ultimate advantage, but only as long as you focus on victory.

♒ Aquarius **Jan. 20-Feb. 19.** Decisions you make in which you are looking out for a loved one's interests along with your own have excellent chances of working out the way you're hoping.

♓ Pisces **Feb. 20-March 20.** Your chances for personal gain are much stronger than usual today, especially if you get involved with some type of commercial arrangement with an influential friend.

♈ Aries **March 21-April 19.** It is smart not to delegate an assignment to others that you're capable of doing better than anybody else. You work on it.

♉ Taurus **April 20-May 20.** You're a resourceful person to begin with, so it isn't unlikely that you'll come up with one of your better ideas today. It not only could be profitable for you, but for everybody involved.

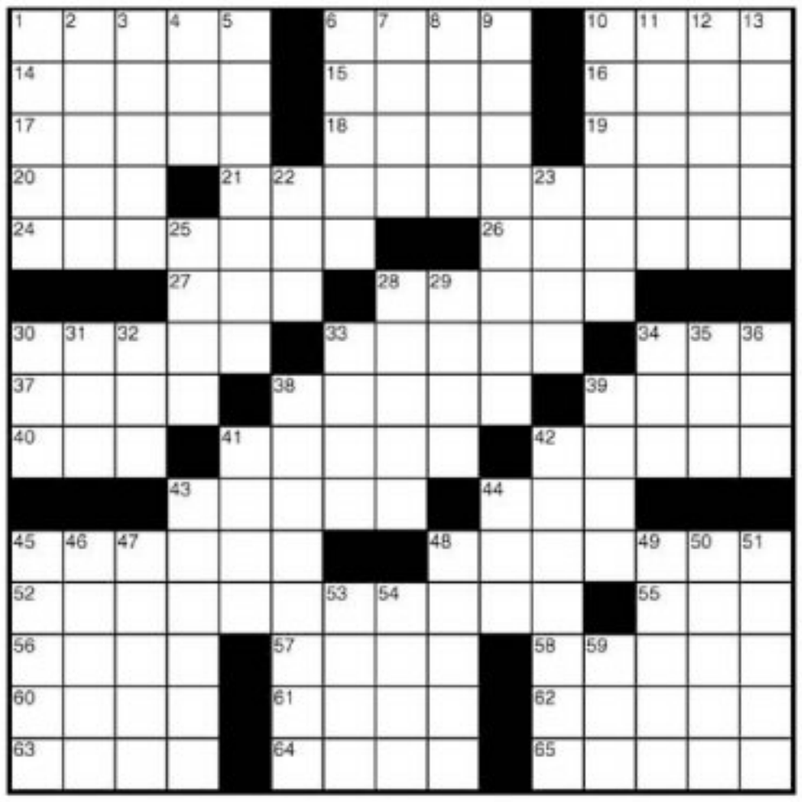
♊ Gemini **May 21-June 20.** You should take advantage of a social invitation that gives you an opportunity to meet new people. There is a strong chance that you could link up with someone exceptional.

♋ Cancer **June 21-July 22.** Lady Luck is in your corner where your financial interests are concerned. Chances are she will be arranging something quite unique, but it will require your immediate attention.

♌ Leo **July 23-Aug. 22.** t doesn't matter if your tactics appear to be strange to your associates. As long as they are tailored to suit your needs, everything should work out to your satisfaction. **BERNICE BEDE OSOL**

Across
1 Drop a glass
6 Trendy
10 Pear variety
14 — luego!
15 — - — -tat-tat
16 Soprano's counterpart
17 Gain admission
18 Dolly and her clones
19 Use a spatula
20 Not sm. or med.
21 Fiber sources (2 wds.)
24 Left in the lurch
26 Assert without proof
27 Tattoo site
28 Brawl
30 Athletes
33 100 kopecks
34 — wheel
37 Autobahn vehicle
38 Beatles' "Eleanor"
39 Raspberry stem
40 Mo. multiples
41 Keg stoppers
42 Blandly urbane
43 Groovy
44 Stick up
45 Cellar access
48 Spooky
52 Thingamajig
55 Carioca's home
56 Diatribe
57 Really impresses
58 Fix a manuscript
60 Adams or Brickell
61 Found a roost
62 Cast a shadow
63 Got a load of
64 Sudden urges
65 All-out

Down
1 Rock ledge
2 Tropical fruit
3 Late bloomer
4 Sault — Marie
5 Bays
6 Squeaking noise
7 Goldie of "Laugh-In"
8 Gossip tidbit
9 Offhand
10 Stump
11 Dragon puppet
12 Hurt a little
13 Grove
22 Not RAM, but ...
23 Beat a retreat
25 S.A. monkey
28 Humid
29 Subsides
30 Blue-gray bird
31 Not just my
32 Boombox platters
33 Ice palace
34 Meadow murmur
35 Mdse. bill
36 "Golly!"
38 Escapes (2 wds.)
39 Windy City team
41 Laird's accent
42 Closest to now
43 Was the right size
44 Sorority letter
45 Fallen-rock debris
46 Bootlicker
47 Comics orphan
48 Main points
49 Buy a round
50 Grammy winner — Ronstadt
51 Matterhorn echo
53 Ply a gondola
54 Bed size
59 Electrical unit



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SUDOKU **LEVEL: EASY**

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8	4							
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7		4				1		2
	9		1		7			6
							1	9
	1		9					3
		9	5	7		6		

SUDOKU **LEVEL: HARD**

Solution to yesterday's crossword

R	A	J	A	H	■	R	E	P	S	■	T	S	A	R
A	G	O	R	A	■	A	Y	L	A	■	B	O	N	E
M	E	E	T	S	■	B	R	O	W	N	O	U	T	S
■	■	■	E	S	P	I	E	D	■	I	N	L	E	T
S	N	A	R	L	E	D	■	■	O	P	E	■	■	■
A	I	R	I	E	R	■	J	U	M	P	S	H	O	T
L	A	C	E	D	■	L	U	R	A	Y	■	A	W	E
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M	I	I	■	R	A	N	G	Y	■	M	I	D	I	S
I	N	C	H	A	R	G	E	■	H	E	L	E	N	E
■	■	■	A	K	C	■	■	P	A	L	I	N	G	S
F	U	G	U	E	■	A	P	E	M	A	N	■	■	■
I	N	U	N	D	A	T	E	D	■	N	E	W	E	R
L	I	L	T	■	S	E	A	R	■	I	S	E	R	E
M	V	P	S	■	H	E	R	O	■	E	S	S	A	Y

How to play Sudoku: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

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3

Pats' balancing act set for encore performance

Team resembles that of 2003, 2004 Super Bowl teams in Week 1 with perfect passing, running blend and a tough defense Will fans see a different look against the Cardinals?

Who would have thought that Stevan Ridley and the Patriots defense were the two best fantasy football plays on New England for Week 1?

Tom Brady threw the ball 31 times on Sunday, while New England ran it 35 times. That type of balance hasn't been seen around these parts for quite some time. New England has been a pass-all-the-time team since Corey Dillon was taking handoffs, but it looks as though they're going to keep teams guessing more.

"I think maintaining balance in any portion of the game is important, and on offense, certainly," Patriots offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels said yesterday. "If you're able to do more than one thing well and able to move the ball in different ways, I think it just forces the defense to have to defend a lot of different things in your offense. You can't really settle into one thing and get comfortable with that."

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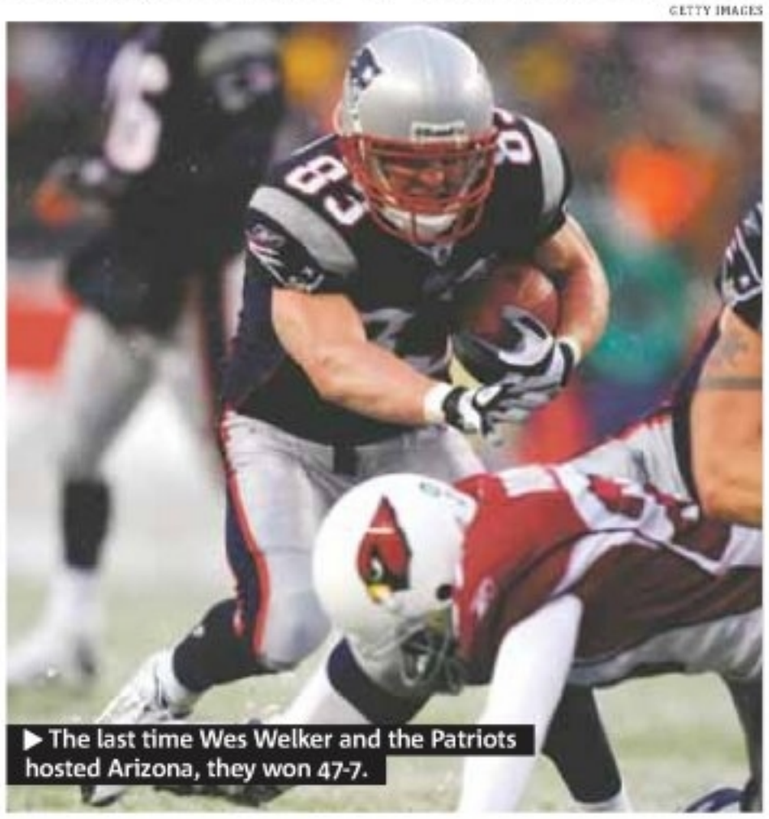

▶ The last time Wes Welker and the Patriots hosted Arizona, they won 47-7.

Where's Welker?

Wes Welker was on the field for just 43 of 67 offensive plays for the Pats Sunday.

Patriots OC Josh McDaniels said yesterday that the plan was Tennessee-specific. "Each week we try to make the decision on what groupings or what personnel matchups may give us (an advantage)."

Arizona doesn't come to mind when you think of great defenses, but the Cardinals are 8-2 over their last 10 games with John Skelton or Kevin Kolb at QB (Kolb will start Sunday) and haven't scored more than 23 points in any of them.

"They're a team that plays a lot of linebackers from their base defense," McDaniels said. "They give you a lot of different looks. They're a team that I would say has an extensive pressure package. They do a great job of trying to disrupt the passing game with pressure and also at the same time do a good job of affecting the running game, at the same time with those same pressures."

But perhaps their biggest non-offensive weapon is Patrick Peterson.

"Very dangerous on punt returns, that goes without saying," Bill Belichick said. "Big guy, has good length, good speed so [he's a] hard guy to throw over in the secondary; excellent ball skills."

JIMMY TOSCANO
sports@metro.us

In the news

Seguin re-signs

Star forward Tyler Seguin will be a Boston Bruin until 2019, as he inked a six-year, $34.5 million extension yesterday. Seguin is now the second-highest paid player on the Bruins, just behind captain Zdeno Chara.

"I've started my career here and I fell in love on my first visit," Seguin said. "I'm a Bruin and I'm happy to be part of this group of guys and I consider them my brothers and I'm happy to start a life here." The 20-year-old led Boston in scoring in 2011 with 29 goals and 38 assists.

ON TV TODAY

MLB

YANKEES AT RED SOX
7 P.M., NESN

Metro's NFL Power Rankings | by Mike Greger

1 — 49ERS (1-0)
They have the best defense and best coach in football. Heck, even Randy Moss contributed. They spent an entire year battling to earn some respect from the league and media. They made the NFC Championship game. And they still were picked to lose to the Packers without putting up much of a fight. Jim Harbaugh and crew wanted to make a statement in Week 1, and make a statement they did. They earn our top spot.

2 — PATRIOTS (1-0)
Teams have had two years to gather tape on tight ends Aaron Hernandez and Rob Gronkowski, and still no one has found an answer for either of them.

3 — RAVENS (1-0)
It's time to stop hating on Joe Flacco. He can make all the throws and this team is loaded on offense, for a change. We already know about Ed Reed, Ray Lewis, et al.

4 — BRONCOS (1-0)
So much for worrying about all that rust on Peyton Manning. It's like he never left. And he has a much better all-around defense in Denver than he had in Indy.

5 — FALCONS (1-0)
The aerial show they've been building and investing in is better than advertised. Did you see Julio Jones on Sunday?

6 — COWBOYS (1-0)
Tony Romo always looks good in September, right? DeMarco Murray and Kevin Ogletree look like solid contributors as well. For now, they are contenders.

7 — BEARS (1-0)
Naming former Vikings head coach Mike Tice offensive coordinator was maybe the biggest move any team made this offseason. Jay Cutler should be thankful.

8 — TEXANS (1-0)
We'll take Arian Foster on one bad knee, with this dominating defense. Everyone's favorite Super Bowl pick may finally come through in the playoffs with Matt Schaub healthy.

9 — STEELERS (0-1)
Sure they lost to an impressive Denver team, but they were one or two plays away. Tracy Porter, anyone? Big Ben will be fine.

10 — JETS (1-0)
Who needs Tim Tebow? For one week, Mark Sanchez looked like Joe Namath. Stephen Hill looked like Don Maynard. And Darrelle Revis looked like ... Darrelle Revis.

11 — REDSKINS (1-0)
Robert Griffin III isn't Cam Newton. He might be better. Put him on a team with Brian Orakpo and a motivated DeAngelo Hall, and you have a winner.

12 — PACKERS (0-1)
The Pack will score points, but they won't get to where they want to go — nothing short of the Super Bowl — until the defense can figure it out.

13 — GIANTS (0-1)
They were due for a letdown after last year's magical run to the championship. It's too early to panic: The Giants will be fine.

14 — CHARGERS (1-0)
Philip Rivers was humming, but they can't settle for all those field goals. Against a team with a real offense, i.e. not the Raiders, they won't be able to pull it out.

15 — BUCCANEERS (1-0)
With the guidance of former Rutgers coach Greg Schiano, they're the NFL's most improved team. They held the Panthers to 10 rushing yards on Sunday. Yes, 10.

16 — LIONS (1-0)
They flashed the explosiveness that made them a trendy Super Bowl pick after a slow start. You can't get down on Matt Stafford and Calvin Johnson after one slow start.

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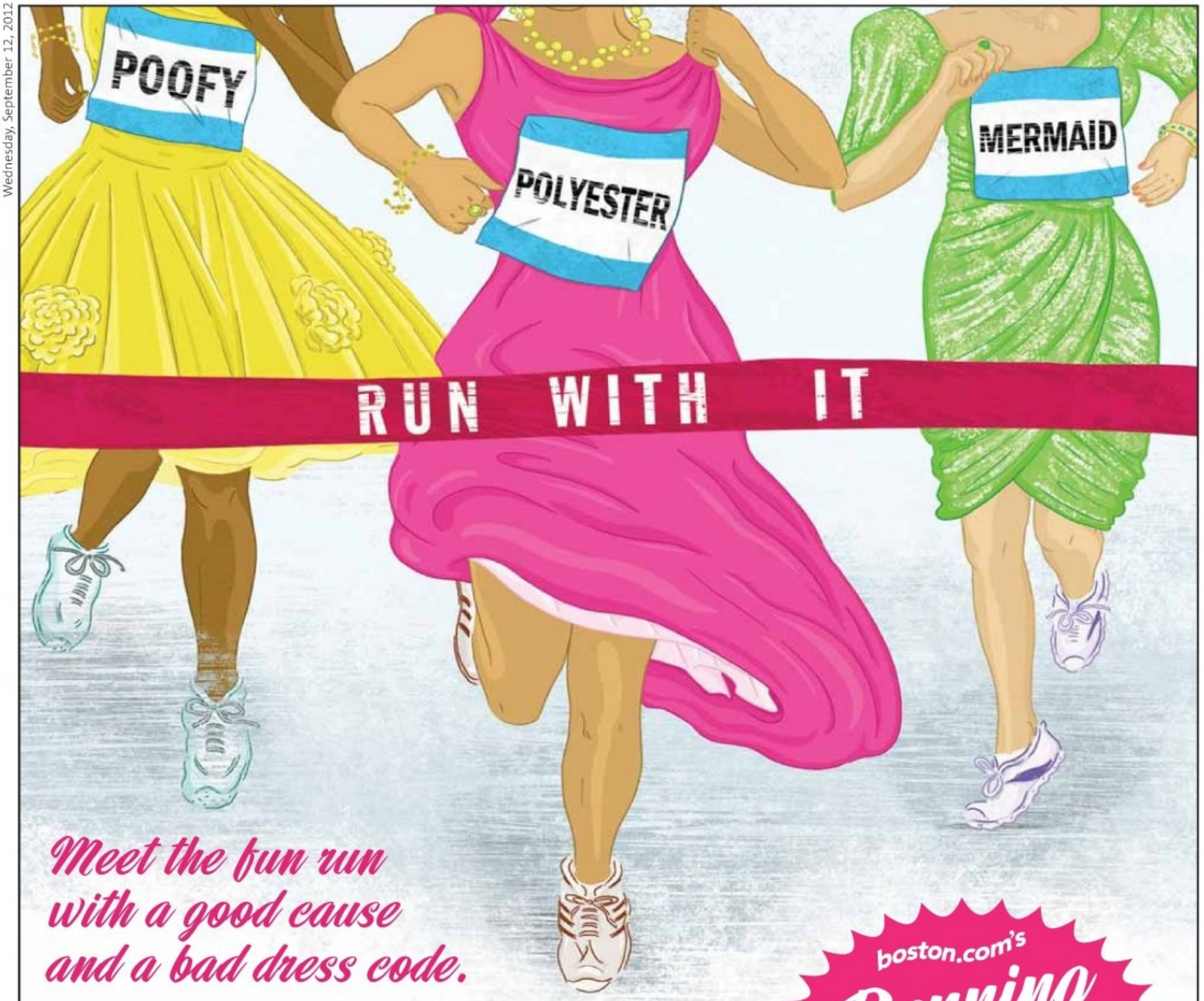

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GETTY IMAGES

▶ There have been plenty of visible red seats at Fenway over the past few weeks.

Sox-Yankees tickets going for $1.99

It wasn't too long ago that buying a standing room only ticket for a Red Sox-Yankees game at Fenway Park on the day of the game was closer to $199 than $1.99.

Yesterday at 5 p.m., StubHub.com had advertised third base-side standing room tickets going for a penny under $2. The instant download and service fees were actually higher than the advertised ticket price.

According to a Bloomberg news report yesterday, the price of a ticket sold on the online secondary market averaged $66.78.

The average price for a Red Sox-Yankees game was $153.48 in 2009, $141.15 in 2010 and $186.79 in 2011, according to the report.

The drastic drop in ticket sales is undoubtedly due to the fact that the Red Sox are enduring their worst season in nearly 50 years and currently sit in dead last in the competitive AL East.

MATT BURKE

Misery loves company

◗ Red Sox fans would welcome a full-fledged Yankees collapse ◗ Phelps tonight, Hughes tomorrow for NYY ◗ Sox strive to finish season strong

The Red Sox-Yankees rivalry has had its share of late-season drama. There was 1948 and 1949, when the two teams battled it out in classic pennant races. The seesaw 1978 campaign will never be forgotten, nor will the epic that was the 2004 ALCS.

However, each of those struggles saw both teams vying for supremacy. Rarely does one play spoiler to the other. Such is the case this year as Boston fans can cling to a shred of intrigue in an otherwise horrendous season. Including last night's series-opener at Fenway Park, the Sox meet the first-place Bombers in six of their final 21 games. While a New York collapse from a 10-game lead on July 18 would not match the magnitude of Boston's toilet flush last September, it would give some New Englanders a reason to smile come October, especially if the Sox had something to do with it.

JARED WICKERHAM/GETTY IMAGES

▶ Bobby Valentine watches batting practice yesterday.

While Red Sox fans are hoping the Yanks continue to spiral, New Yorkers look to a few scenarios that may help their team survive:

The schedule
Including three games in woebegone Fenway Park this week, New York plays five of its last seven series against the dregs of the AL (two series against Boston and Toronto and one against Minnesota) and four of its last six series at home.

A-Rod
He's not the player he once was, but Alex Rodriguez remains a dangerous bat. And a hot one. Since returning from a broken left hand, Rodriguez is batting .308 with two homers, two doubles and six RBIs in seven games.

Pettitte still possible
Can a 40-year-old who has made nine starts since 2010 and is rehabbing a broken ankle make a difference? In the case of Andy Pettitte, yes. The lefty was one of the team's best starters during his stint earlier this year and has a chance to return for the final push.

TONY LEE
sports@metro.us

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Out of Sight!

Buyers like the Hollybrook homes at SouthField enough to buy them before they've even been built

Most people wouldn't commit to buying a pair of shoes without trying them on, or at least seeing them. So, how does anyone make one of the biggest purchases in their lives before it even exists physically? The Cottages at Hollybrook, part of the development at SouthField in South Weymouth, will break ground next month, but according to Paul Abelite, co-principal at Interactive Building Group, which is one of four residential construction companies developing the old naval air base, Hollybrook is 75 percent sold, with purchase and sale agreements signed. Yet homeowners can't move in until early 2013.

"There is a pent-up demand: These are experienced homebuyers, they are educated," says Abelite. "And these are easy homes to sell. These are not tract homes. They have good architectural detail, and people can see it is a good product."

"These are aggressively priced."
PAUL ABELITE

Just as the buyer is committed via the purchase and sale agreement, IBG adheres to its agreed design guidelines so that what the customers saw on paper is what they get. Also, buyers' money sits safely in escrow.

"It's not working capital," says Abelite. "People wouldn't be as eager to buy if that were the case. They know their money's safe in case of any default."

Besides being able to plan a move at an easy pace, buying in early at this ongoing development means a good deal, price-wise.

"These are aggressively priced. The payoff for being among the first homeowners is that the price makes these a good investment," says Abelite. "Especially if the housing market continues to prosper as it has this year."

LINDA LABAN
linda.laban@metro.us

Buy now

The Cottages at Hollybrook, SouthField in South Weymouth

These 1,400-square-foot homes have two beds, two and a half baths and two master suites on each floor. The 31 homes are part of IBG's cottage series, boasting three styles — Beechwood, Woodbury and Sandalwood, each with traditional New England vibes.

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Leo Julian, Marketing Maven of Newbury Street

By Attorney

George Warshaw

This week's column is about a unique individual, Leo Julian.

Leo Julian is not a guy who makes a fortune every day; he's not selling real estate and raking in big bucks. Leo manages a parking lot.

The lot is at the old Louis building on Newbury Street in Boston, corner of Berkeley. His customers look forward to seeing him every day and talking with him every day. Many, as did I, park there because of Leo.

He wears a different bow tie matching shirt combination every day. He must have hundreds. He's fashionable and personable on a fashion street with high-end salons and big name clothes designers.

Leo connects with people and he knows how to connect with people. It comes naturally to him. He becomes part of your work-day family, part of your survival network.

He directs customers and strangers to restaurants, bistros and anything in the area you need. He has water bowls out for the dogs – people stop and converse with him about their pets and everything else.

Leo understands that it's a genuine personal connection that builds a business. That's what other miss.

Many consider themselves slick marketers and sales persons. Most overrate their skills. They talk about "building relationships" but how would their customers answer this simple question:

Do you look forward to seeing or speaking with him/her every day?

We look forward to seeing Leo everyday. Sadly, the lot is closing next week as the building is renovated for its new tenant. We'll miss Leo, but never say never. Perhaps he'll be back.

GWA

George Warshaw is a real estate attorney and author. He represents buyers and sellers of homes and condos in Massachusetts, and prepares wills, trusts, and estate plans. George welcomes new clients and questions at metro@warshawlaw.com.

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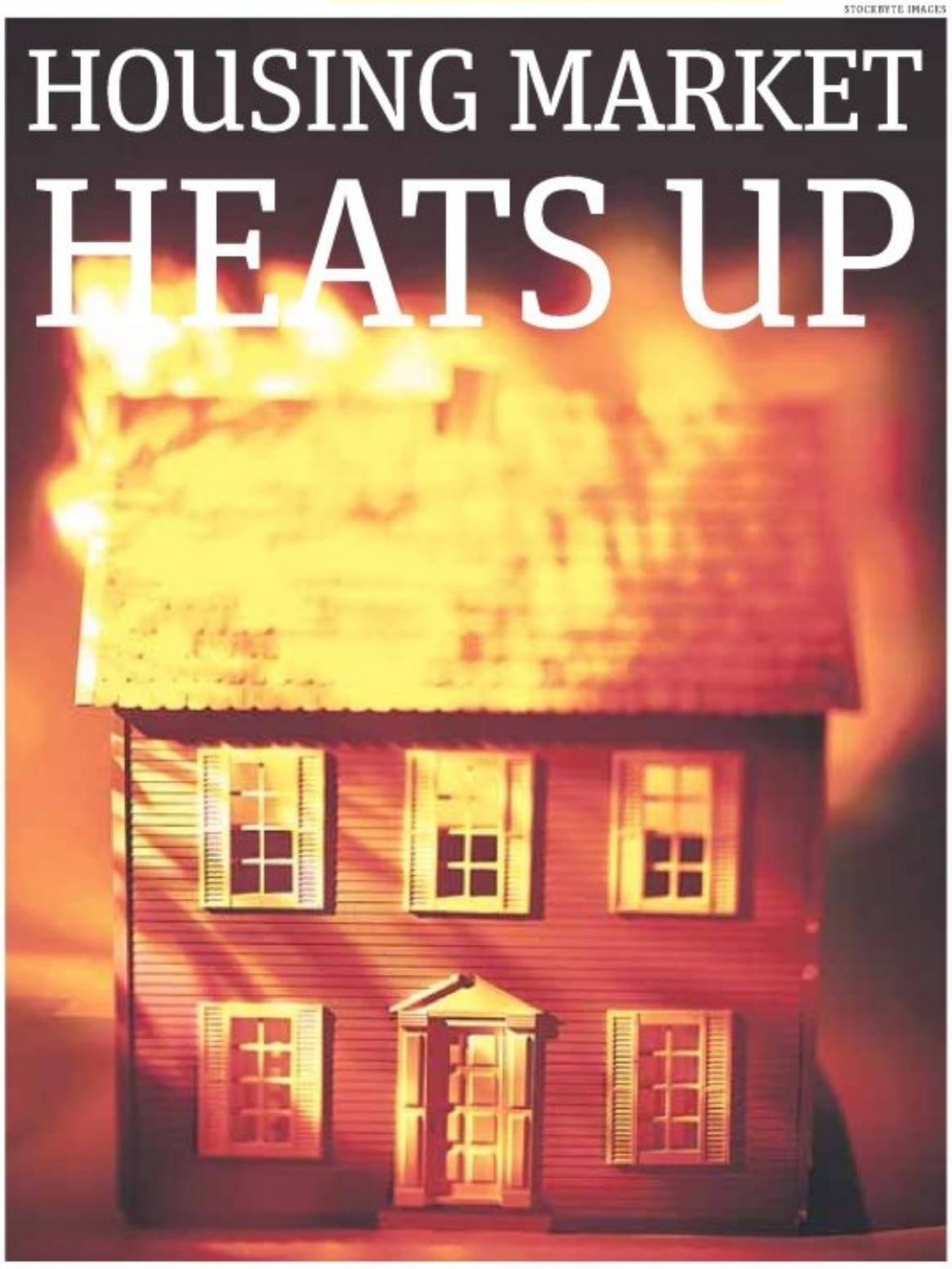

HOUSING MARKET HEATS UP

A hot summer of buying and selling paves the way for an even brighter fall ◗ Massachusetts sees 13th consecutive months of sales increases ◗ This is a good sign

In the wake of a strong summer market, real estate brokers and analysts are expecting an upward trend heading into the fall season, with both prices and sales on the rise.

July home sales rose 24 percent over the previous year, marking the 13th consecutive month with an increase in sales year over year, according to the Massachusetts Association of Realtors. Condominium sales also jumped 23.1 percent from last July.

"Once July and August come, things usually slow down. We did not see that slow down. We still had a lot of activity," says Bill Dermody, manager of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage in Needham and president of the Greater Boston Association of Realtors. "I do expect listings to go up. I'm cautiously optimistic the market has turned."

In Needham, a town known for steep prices, the summer market was indeed very hot. According to Dermody, some houses sold within days of hitting the market and several had multiple offers.

"There are a lot of good signs pointing toward a real estate recovery," says Cory S. Hopkins, editorial director of The Warren Group, which publishes Banker & Tradesman.

Greater Boston isn't the only area that is seeing an uptick in sales.

"Down the Cape, things are going well. Western Massachusetts, things are going well again. There are some pockets where things are a little tougher, but overall there are positive numbers," says Dermody.

By the numbers

$325K
The median selling price for single-family homes in July, up from $319,000 in July 2011

$300K
The median selling price of condominiums, up from $288,000 in July 2011

— Massachusetts Association of Realtors

CHRISTINA WALLACE
christina.wallace@metro.us

▶ This Needham home was on the market for one week this summer and received multiple offers before selling for its asking price.

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at home with metro

Your guide for buying in a new development

As the housing market reels from the fall it took in back 2008, buying a pad in a new building is a smart idea, says Stephen G. Kliegerman, president of Halstead Property Development Marketing.

"You're starting to see more new developments come back to the pipeline," he says.

Combine that with low interest rates, higher rents due to low vacancies and the opportunity to build equity by paying your own mortgage, and it's no wonder that the case is being made for ownership. If you're ready to buy, Kliegerman has advice.

"The first thing you should do is make sure that your credit is in good shape. No. 2 is, you need to have a down payment. You're probably going to be putting down 20 percent, so start saving money."

When you head to the bank, have ready two current pay stubs, your latest two years of tax returns, a letter of employment and any bonus history you have for the past two or three years, he says.

Kliegerman also advises finding a good developer.

"Almost every developer has somebody who isn't satisfied, but you're looking for somebody with a healthy track record," he says.

More advantages

"You're getting a better quality home, and some would say you're also getting a better quality neighbor," Kliegerman says. "Because they have invested interest in maintaining the value of their property, they're gonna take care of their home better — which means maybe they won't be as noisy, maybe they'll be more courteous in the hallways."

MEREDITH ENGEL
meredith.engel@metro.us

ZOOKAR

▶ To find a good developer, Kliegerman recommends searching online, researching the broker and asking friends who have bought spaces of their own.

When you've found a property you like, it's important to move quickly

"Look for any building that's being constructed or any vacant land and start to do research," Kliegerman says. "Contact your local broker if you have one, take a look online. ... Then I would try to contact either the broker or the developer early on to get on their predevelopment list, because once those buildings come up to market, basically we go down the list: We call those people who called us first. So the earlier you get in, the better ability you'll have to get an apartment there [and] to get your choice of what's available. We start taking names sometimes the day that construction starts or even sometimes before, and we keep those lists all the way until through when we open. It could be anywhere from 12 to 24 months, typically."

"Once those buildings come up to market, basically we go down the list."
KLIEGERMAN

The Boston Home Center

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